

IMAGE BUILDING FOR ISLAMIC SCHOOLS THROUGH MEDIA: AN ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

While establishing new school chain in Pakistan amid many already established chains that getting good share out of it, is really an uphill task that opens up debate of peculiarity, means which model to adopt for penetration and income; secular or Islamic? There are merits and demerits of tilting toward the one. Islam is considered as the second largest populated religion in the world. The Muslims are scattered in numbers in every part of the globe. Their impression isn't what they think of themselves and what they really are; they are searching respectable recognition necessary for their co existence and identity. Their image is being damaged through media (print, electronic and broadcasting). Their system of education is taken for granted and their educational institutions are tagged as terrorists' nurseries. There is a dire need to devise a mechanism that builds image (artifact that depicts or records visual perception) for Islamic School, a harbinger of transformation in post modern world, society through effectual usage of media.

Having acknowledged issues those are associated with negative image, this study encompasses and undertakes ways to look into it by reviewing established literature, recommendations and suggestion given by noteworthy researchers and media experts encompassing role of media in framing fundamental image of Islamic schools. Unfortunately, the overall picture exhibited by media is negative and detrimental.

KEYWORDS: Image Building, Penetration and Income, Media (Print, Electronic and Broadcasting)

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to analyze issue critically important not only for the existence of Muslims World Wide but other communities as well, the image building for Islamic School through the usage of available Media. The analysis is based upon available literature, published reports, featured articles and related manuscripts in this very regard. Since eighteen century till date, the media has been frequently referring Islam as threat for the stability of rest of the world. Islam is under attack and being portrayed a ruthless religion not compatible with post modern developments globally; reason being availability of excessive written and visual material against Islam. Especially live images on cinema and television leave impression that never equates written words in carrying on label and line. Hollywood has been projecting negative images of the Arabs and Muslims for century as referenced in the manuscript (Shaheen, 2001). By going through this material all viewers are led to get impression that all Arabs are Muslim and all Muslim are Arabs. They consider Muslim as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics through depictions of bad character. More than 95 % Arab (Muslims) film role depict them abnormal, inhumane character (Shaheen, 2001).

When one examines the image (artifact that depicts or records visual perception) of Islam in the world at large, one perceives it as Villain. Islamic School's image is its perception by the environment, education market and negative propaganda. For building image all aspects defining an education institute is needed to be on board. Like program of studies, plans, methods of teaching, mission and its realization as organizational culture and dedication to the Islamic principles accommodating perception in place. So it could provide understanding what is Islamic school? What does it represent? How set of values can be incorporated in school? Another aspect would be how Islamic school is perceived internally and externally? It is natural to argue that an Islamic school's competitive advantage in the education market and environment is its image Lidia Bialoń (2010). For creating, protecting and building the image, two aspects are important shaping Islamic school's identity and establishing a repo with communication channels to transmit message to all stakeholders along competitors too. The most desirable question would be to what image an Islamic School wants to project? It should be innovative, attractive and student friendly. Like for example

Existing and designed courses along with character building curricula;

Training mechanism for the teaching and non teaching staff;

Research department for initiating innovative products for value addition;

Collaborations with national and international bodies to remain intact with academic developments;

Social responsibilities principles are functional;

The above mentioned criteria should be helpful, if associated with brand awareness, perceived quality and brand loyalty. The system of visual information composed of elements like logo, trade mark, School color, architecture, lecture room and library. It's imperative to make sure how communication be understood by the stakeholder.

We need to encompass all relevant pressing factors in order to form and frame a cohesive strategy that may support our cause in the longer run.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study integrates widespread written materials by distinguished Management, Marketing and Media experts books, articles, definition of terms published reports, fact based surveys etc. have been used to devise a conceptual framework for the said study. The core conceptualization of this research initiative revolves around selected personality theories study.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Negative portrayal of Islam by Media influences the true perception of Islam.

H2: Image building is necessary to change the orthodox perception of Islamic Schools.

H3: Media plays an important role in building negative perception of Islamic Schools.

H4: Positive portrayal of Islamic schools through media would enhance the influence of Islamic school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

H1: Negative Portrayal of Islam by Media, Influences the True Perception of Islam

Though it's an old falsehood but after the exposition of media, its global impact and control by the west, it gets

pace and makes every person affected by the negative portrayal of Islam. To know the root cause of this rivalry between the west and Islam, we have to go back through history and find out what happened there and why Islam hasn't had achieved due status in the world, the first phase began in 622 when Muslims took over the scene by holding grand expansion of Islam from Arab peninsula to North Africa, Asia and Europe, this period last till the fall of Granada in 1492. The second phase was in progress when the west started countering Islamic hegemonic expansion by initiating crusades throughout the west and Muslim expansion stopped by power in Vienna, this phase started from eleventh century and lasted until seventeenth century. Then after the end of crusade wars, the west got the tempo to control the world, it's a beginning of domination and colonization of the Muslim world in nineteenth and twentieth century's (see Tehranian, 2000: 204). Other scholars like Halliday (1995: 108) and Shadid and Van Koningsveld (1994) also make such a classification.

Primarily, the negative image of Islam in Europe was aroused by religion. The reason being was the occupation of Muslim over their countries. Their motives were to put barriers in between idealizing Islam by their elite classes. They developed theological interpretations to prove Christianity superior to Islam (Jabri, 1999), this period last till eleventh century when major shift took place. Christian armies captured Spain and military involvements made this era associated with economic expansion and the desire to evict Muslims from holly land at any cost. The situation got dramatic twist, the negative image of Islam during colonial era, by an attempt to legitimize colonial occupation over Muslims countries (Esposito, 1992) by the few western powers. This time instead of religion the attack was based on modern Darwinist approach. The religions of the world were put in situation to prove them logically, Islam and Christianity specifically (Esposito, 1992). Such narrow-mindedness passed on through education, children and school books (medium of instruction of that time). There is an immediate need to correct what has been written so far to malign Islam by spreading negative image through education, school books and media content.

After religion the model that has been used to display abhorrence against Islam and Muslims in the west was the model of clash of civilizations. This model has made scientists, politicians, journalists and strategist influenced to think through it, because it serves the purpose to get secured their periphery politically militarily and economically. Samuel Huntington (1993) argues in his popular article that "the problem for the west is not terrorists but Islam a different civilization whose people are convinced that they are superior to others and the problem for Islam isn't CIA but west a different civilization whose people think themselves superior". According to Buzan, a professor in international studies at the University of Warwick "competition with the West is made more intoxicating by the fact that Islam is still itself a energetic and growing identity in the world".

Having gone through all historical events and incidents, now we can say that the western representation of Muslims and Arabs is not a recent cock-and-bull story but a deep rooted story of rivalry and hatred. Whether the story began centuries ago or it occurs in recent times, the west never bothers to go out of mentality to consider Muslims and Arabs as alien other or rather Enemy. Islam is being targeted by media every news about Islam is conceived as disturbing, shocking and threatening in the west (Hippler, 1995) in order to make every one aware about Islam. The earlier conflict with Muslims and Arabs has changed by the alternative use of media at large. In past Muslims were considered as ignorant, slave traders, uncivilized but recently they are called as terrorists, fundamentalists etc. Jack G. Shaheen recapitulates Esposito (Islamic Threat, pp. 203, 180.) and affirms that: Research proves that dangerous image of Islam is still continuing through depiction of Islam as villain, whether they are televised or published, unsurprisingly the western media portrays a distorted image of Islam. Artificial stereotype of Islam are present everywhere in western media by all available means of

communication, whether old or new i.e. social media. Muslims are being presented as anti rational, barbaric, anti democracy etc. In maintaining such discourse western media started attacking many Islamic concepts too. First of all the term Islam is being considered as opposite to its original meaning that is peace, in context to this term word Jihad is misinterpreted by the use of media as Muslims are bloodthirsty and love violence people so they narrow downed the scope of jihad into terrorism. Muslims (Munoz, 1999), their dresses, their way of living, their eating habits, their dealings, everything is made questionable through western media. The movies have been dramatizing Islamic concept as myth, Arabs as uncivilized, arrogant character ever since the camera started shooting. The Muslim women characterized as slave, wearing veils with lowered heads, obeying their ruthless family members especially their husbands (Noakes, 1998). The western media presents Arabs Muslims around three Bs “billionaire”, “bomber” and “belly dancer” just to make fun of it and defame Arab Muslim as deprived of having artistic sense.

Walt Disney’s popular cartoon Aladin is portraying Arabs in negative manner by transforming it into Americanize outlook. Greedy, bloodthirsty, immoral are the fixed images that have been broadcasted by the western cartoons on a large scale for long. There are many examples to prove the point like for example Alibaba is widely shown animated cartoon series in the west; in this series alibaba is exemplified as ALI BABA THE MAD DOG OF DESERT. James Baerg, Director Program Practices for CBS-TV, once said “the Arab stereotype is interesting to many people. It is an easy thing to do while feeling that people are bored so throw Arab in the scene as sex and violence for instigating audience to be in”.

Point of No Return (1993) Cloak and Dagger (1984), Puppet Master II (1990), American Samurai (1992) Reds (1981), and Power (1986), in these films producer deliberately used words that were against Muslims though these films are on different topics. Additionally Motion pictures are made of, to target Islam and Muslims. The tradition of portraying Muslim as villain, traced back from very time of inventing motion camera and the initial Hollywood’s film Shiekh of the 1920, is still continue and today’s sheikhs are uncultured and ruthless, attempting to procure media corporation (Network, 1977), destroy the world’s economy (Rollover, 1981), kidnap Western women (Jewel of the Nile, 1985), direct nuclear weapons at Israel and the United States (Frantic, 1988), and influence foreign policies (American Ninja 4: The Annihilation, 1991).

The western image makers, including religious authorities, political establishments and corporate media corporations are creating image of Muslims as amusing and cruel or tragic for their consumers, interested in buying them identical. It’s a long story of hatred to be transmitting through mass media; more than 900 feature films (Mirza, 2002) containing Arab characters. The vast majority of them, such as Prisoner in the Middle East, Wanted Dead or Alive, The Delta Force, and Executive Decision negatively stereotype Arabs and Muslims, only two films out of hundred in which Arab presented as hero The Lion of the Desert and The warrior. Since 9/11 the situation has been worsens and made every person in the west uncritically agreed upon the content being presented through media to portray Muslims as terrorist and uncivilized. Usually the language used by western media to define Muslim is inappropriate, illogical and unjustified.

Analysis

The way Islam has been portrayed through media has influenced the true perception of Islam in the eyes of a common man. Media is a very strong source in order to frame the true picture of any phenomenon. Western media has tagged Islam with extremism and terror instead of picturing the causes behind this reactionary existence of Muslims in different part of the globe. Not to mention the non-Muslims but even the Muslims get impressed with this notion of Islamic ideology and especially those who claim themselves moderate Muslims are the ones who seem most influenced with this

biased sense of imagery. It is needed to present true Islamic teachings in the real sense of words. It would help to portray Islam in its true and real sense.

H2: Image Building is Necessary to Change the Orthodox Perception of Islamic Schools

Referring hypotheses H1; negative portrayal of Islam by Media, influences the true perception of Islam it is established that image building is necessary to change the orthodox perception of Islamic school. What is image building? Image building is the effort put in by a company, a group, an organization or nation usually through effective communication to ensure a good reputation or a good name. *Image* is the word in contemporary literature to portray an impression; perception about may be of a person, organization or nation. It forces us to either have relation with someone or neglect him, it often affect advises that come out of word of mouth communication and makes other agree to do what he is advised. Image doesn't mean to have quality of goods and services offered by the one, the quality of communication and keeping an eye on it also counts. Image isn't totally an actuality but impression of actuality. According to Bernstein (2004), the first impression that companies create in the minds of Stakeholders are even more important than the effort they make to uphold their reputation. Without right strategies for communication, human rationality doesn't motivate people to take right decisions. So here proactive approach works better than reactive approach; in terms of success. Van Riel (1995, in Hooghiemstra, 2000) becomes aware of image as a set of meaning by which an object is known, and determines what people think, describe, relate or remember the thing.

According to Hooghiemstra, corporate image is the same as corporate reputation and this has become so important that all companies are spending more and more money to get the public to like them and see them as an important part of the society. Portraying bad image to the stake holders may damage the reputation and put it to die. Keeping all the discourse in account everyone wants to live longer especially organizations, they intend to spend more and more in image building; a lifeline to existence, Rajshekhar et al (1994). In corporate world companies want to get in list of those involved in sponsorship for the societal upbringing just to beautify their image among stakeholders. Rajshekhar et al (1994) says communication is the best way to enhance image of any company and off course to maintain it for long too. People use different channels of communications to shape their impression about Islamic school. There is no chance to avoid image building activity specifically for an Islamic school, due to its direct connection with negative image of Islam. Experts discuss issue precisely by suggesting sponsorship to uplift the image of Islamic school. Sponsorship advances the relation of Islamic school with its stakeholders and society at large.

Along sponsorship; mass communication is also to be used to impact over people by good image. TV, Radio has drastic effect on public according to the Big Bang Theory (communication theory that says that the media especially radio and television is all powerful and has tremendous effect on public), easy way to reach out all stakeholders. Media is very important and powerful tool to build image according to Grey & Balmer (1998). According to Nakra (2000) new technology has changed the pace of attachment with public and becomes most effective means of communication between stakeholder directly. In current scenario every movement is observed and monitored by the participants due to the availability of media old and new, at every level. In corporate world even the name of company is sufficient to communicate its goals, services and products. Numbers of companies have changed their branded name just to make good image of themselves like for example UK firm, WOOL WORTH GROUP after getting complain and bad image changed its name to KINGFISHER just to keep distance from the past. Islamic school being an independent identity needs change in perception created by the western media across the world. In order to build image partnership is another usable thing to apply. There are so many

alternatives in management to address image issue proactively; rebuilding image isn't an easy task, it needs hard working with sophisticated planning to achieve the task, because image moves ahead of the product, it plays through minds, selective perception may kill the actual quality in services. As, Islamic school is associated with the negative image of Islam that has been in market since long by the use of media, good reputation is mandatory to continue the operation in market, so Islamic school shouldn't avoid monitoring scandals, negative images, bad reputation for devising strategies to remain active in market and get maximum customers, stakeholders liking.

Analysis

In fact, the need is not only to re-build the image of Islamic schools but even to derive altogether a new focus upon the way it is to be presented before a common man. Muslims and Islam are two different phenomena. Media has portrayal Islam through the acts being undertaken by different Muslim organizations, communities and nations round the globe. For instance, lavish life style of Arabs, is a trademark of hatred not only among western societies but also in Muslim communities round the globe. The culture of these oil rich nations is not ISLAM but most of the time against the intrinsic teachings of Islam. It is the responsibility of Media barons to differentiate between what is the norm and how it is practiced. The core identity of Islamic system of education is needed to be presented through Islamic schools in order to make the world understand that Islam is the only religion of the world that addresses every corner of a man's life. It is to be manifested that in these schools, we are not harboring terrorism but nourishing true and peaceful Muslims.

H3: Media Plays an Important Role in Building Negative Perception of Islamic Schools

While judging media plays an important role in building negative image of Islam school, we find few manuscripts that support the discourse to prove. Since the advent of new era, end of cold war and an attack on world trade centre 9/11, the enmity against Islam appeared on the scene as fashionable phenomenon of the age, gearing up desire to formulate imperialist policies against Islam, the Islamic schools considered as Madrasas (Abdessalm, 2002), have been of greater than ever interest to analysts and officials involved in policy making process. The answer to the question, Why Madrasas has gotten global attention? is due to Al Qaeda and Taliban, and upbringing of their several leaders through political radical Islamic teaching in Madrasas. So, a negative perception laid down its foundation deep in mind that these Madrasas are providing base to promote extremism, terrorism, militancy among children. These Madrasas are promoting anti US sentiments (Barboza, 1993) in the minds of younger lot; in contrary, the situation isn't what being presented. No doubt Islamic school in Arabic language is similar to the Madrasas, but the meaning associated with it may not match the historical evidence in this regard. Historically Madrasas were differentiated as institution of higher education, for basic Islamic education word used Kuttab (Blanchard, 2007) confined to Quran. So western observers perceive any school whether primary, secondary, or advanced as Madrasa, just to promulgate selective perception across by media i.e. print, electronic and social.

The most important thing that needs to be in mind while dealing media is its power to set agenda and characterize perception. The western media has been using this power to present Islam negatively. Through media and educational institutes western scholar mis-guided their public about Islam, Islamic educational institutes, Islamic organizations etc. According to Kincheloe who says "In the Western tradition of writing about, researching, and representing Islam, Europeans have consistently positioned Muslims as the irrational, fanatic, sexually enticing, and despotic others. This portrayal, as many scholars have argued, has been as much about Western anxieties, fears, and self-doubts as about Islam".

According to Kellner Bush administration has been irresponsible in presenting American stance after 9/11 and made whole western world in menace against Islam. About Al Qaida, mostly things were overly charged, especially the information that has been passed on to public about Muslims, was inaccurate and culturally biased.

Analysis

The point to be kept in mind here is the intentional display of western media regarding Islamic image. It is noteworthy that Madrassas were labeled as a place where new generation of terrorists are rooted up. It is again a misconception and selective perception without any foremost rationality. Centuries old seminaries as Al-Azhar university in Cairo is a branded example in this very regard (many other can be quoted) that has been spreading true teaching of Islam for more than thousand years. In this age of technology, we need to use media wagons to counter the attacks from west and to portray a consolidate system of education presented by Islam.

H4: Positive Portrayal of Islam through Media Would Enhance the Influence of Islamic School

Muslims are second largest community in the world, about 23.4 % of the total population according to the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life. Moreover, a comparatively large portion of it, more than 50%, is under age group called young. If the total population of the world is 6 billion, then numbers of Muslims in the world are 1.6billions out of which 0.80 billion approximately are under school going age.

Producing an education system that is based upon Islamic principles along with modern, technological and scientific representation is not an easy task but uphill. Though Muslims couldn't find place to live confidently due to undue bombardment of western media, they are facing identity crises. As Muslims are influenced by their norm and value system that seems to be odds while interacting world global culture. Understanding Islamic identity issue will help others to deal Muslim better. It's a two ways process of increasing mutual understanding through cultural adjustment. For evaluating results, Islamic identity would be gauged through Islamic schools performance. It makes Islamic schools to refocus upon connecting and relating well to others as many people around is not in Islamic schools.

Religion is most important factor of influencing human being in any society, emotionally, physically, psychologically and mentally. According to Al- farooqi, that we may agree with the definition that the study of religion is the study of mankind" (al-Faruqi, 1984). In order to enhance our understanding about other people living in the world we have to acknowledge Christians as population wise number one community in the world. Christianity has maintained dominance over the western world till Industrial revolution (Dalin and Rust, 1996). Due to industrial revolution the centre of power, knowledge and dominance shifted from church to science, led the foundation of secularization in the state. This whole shift though was a reaction to church for not accepting knowledge based realities but considered as opposition to all religion. As a consequence the Church is symbol of religion in the west thrown out of the business and day to day issues, especially from state matters and education. A breed of secular schools and colleges came into existence.

Professor Grace, Director of the Centre for Research in Catholic Education at the London University Institute of Education, writes: Michael Gallagher has argued (1977:23) that "secular marginalization" has become a dominant feature of Western contemporary intellectual culture with the result that "in the academic and media worlds... religion is subtly ignored as unimportant". The effect of such marginalization can be seen in educational studies and research by the general neglect of the faith-based dimension of any major feature under investigation. Detailed scrutiny of the literature on globalization and education, policy studies, school effectiveness and school leadership or of the conference programs of

organizations such as the American Educational Research Association or the Islamic Educational Research Association will demonstrate this lacuna.

.....it may be argued that while faith based schools have come “out of the ghetto” in terms of their relationship with external agencies, this process does not seem to have happened to the same extent in educational scholarship and research....it must also be noted that the various faith communities themselves have not given much priority to researching the culture and outcomes of their particular schooling systems. (Grace 2003: 149). There is a need to align all these social findings to make Islamic schools work better and under favorable environment as there is little efforts to find out what these Islamic Schools are?

Analysis

It is not only needed but even badly needed to correct the mistakes done by western media in portraying Islam as a bunch of harmful traits. The roots of Islam lie in its foundation and norms. Islamic schools provide an ample opportunity to everyone to get benefit from pure Islamic teachings. Not to talk of children but the adults are also no exceptions. We need to energize our resources and come forward in defending Islam against this false imagery. The focused Islam school is nothing but an open prospect to shape children and aspiring young generation in the right direction and media is one of the most powerful tools to serve this purpose.

CONCLUSIONS

As we are talking about Islam, here is a need to describe what basically Islam is? Islam originates from its roots that is Arabic, means Salama, it means submission, acceptance, to the Will of Almighty and peace, and the aim of Islam is to establish peace for all human beings in the world.

A question that is being searched out by the analysts in the west is what is the difference between Islamic school and Muslim school? Muslim school is one where Muslims happen to be enrolled, where as Islamic school is the one where ethos and hidden things are on board across. By this definition many Islamic schools are Muslim in nature. Head of school is trying to make it Islamic School But students and parents want it a Muslim school (Comment at head teachers' conference). This shows another gap between Islamic school and state as like religion and culture. Portraying positive image of Islamic school in 21 century through media (print, electronic and broadcasting), needs sense of preserving Islamic community's identity by taking part actively in debates, discussions initiated by the people who are under influence of western media. The ongoing debate on multiculturalism, citizenship, clash or coordination of civilizations, the war on terror, Jihad, khalafat, interfaith dialogue, democracy, modernism, post modernism provides chance for Muslims to justify their identity, existence logically, rationally and positively. Multiculturalism is an opportunity for the Islamic schools to broaden breathing space around by incorporating inquiry. Inquiry is an evolving process to think, need social collaboration, deliberation, discussion to make the point constructively available on ground to affect.

As, we live in communication era, where wars are fought by media, won by media. The power of media is evident; it shapes public opinion and hides realities by censorship. During crises public opinion comes out to put pressure on policy makers to do for the resolution of problem (Snider2006:1). Broadcasters become prominent during crises due to transmitting crises information to public, their twist of tongue plays tricky role in diverting public attention towards the issue. In this day and age many media campaigns are instigating negative image of Islam and Muslim. 9/11 incident has been used to capitalize political gain in the situation since occurrence. Media depicts Islam as fundamentalism, extremism

and radicalism. It's true that in post modern world reality may be changed by manipulating the actual fact. There is no significant evidence of strategy among Muslims to counter this negative campaign, which causes sense of threat to the Muslims cultural identity that west is trying to impose its value upon them. An investigation by Jack Shaheen in his book, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood maligns a People*; found that the vast majority of Arab characters in 900 American films were outright racist characters. TV is most followed communication medium in post modern world; about 80 % of population relies upon it for the information, education and entertainment (Philo and Berry2006).

Now it is impossible to revise what has happened to the image of Islam by western media, Muslims around the worlds should come forward and rebuild the damage by their own efforts. These efforts should contain all inclusive process of aligning chains of activities. Improving image would never be achieved if culture and civilization neglected. The true Islamic spirit should be spread timely to negate negative image of Islam. Pluralism provides opening to live in the world equally. In this regard education must not be over looked (Phinney, 1989), many thing Muslims have to educate their community, and of course to west too. Dialogue can be helpful but with acceptance of mutual understandings, history. If through dialogue an environment is built to understand each other, it can be helpful in making sure peace in the world. Media biasness is evident and it's like making people mad of something illogically,

Building positive image of Islam requires multidimensional efforts by all stake holders including the west, Muslims governments, individuals and other communities in the world. The west should harbor prejudicial emotion against Islam while reporting something about Muslims. Genuine knowledge based (training and education) content would be acknowledged and made people agree to think positively across the Muslim world. At the Government Level, diplomatic exchange of knowledge and information would be beneficial to build a better image of Islam in their western minds. At the nongovernmental and organization level collaborations with global media networks would be useful to portray soft image. Narrative, media is responsible for the negative image of Islam and Muslims, can be negated by using it to make distinctions between terrorism and Islam. The media should play a positive role too, for the peaceful coexistence of differences in the world.

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